



Dear Fellow Marylander,

Our nation is awash with grief. The murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others at the hands of police and vigilantes have put painful reminders of racial violence targeting black communities on our news feeds, our televisions and our timelines.

Protesters have taken to the streets worldwide calling on us to say their names and bring justice to their murder only to be met with tear gas, brutality and military-grade resistance ordered by President Trump himself – examples of the excessive use of force the protesters are marching to end.

We are seeing in these demonstrations a collective pain. A frustration stemming from the fact that these realities only enter the public dialogue when brutal deaths are captured on video or when names become trending hashtags. But this is nothing new. Racial injustice is deeply engrained in the foundations of our nation, and for millions of black Americans this grief and fear is familiar. So too is the experience of getting stopped frequently by the police, facing harassment and suspicion in everyday life, or fearing for their lives and their loved ones from a body that is supposed to protect and serve.

[According to data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics](#), black Americans are more likely to be stopped by the police. Police are twice as likely to use force against black residents – and black residents [are killed](#) by police at a rate twice as high as white residents.

In 2015, the unrest in Baltimore City after the death of Freddie Gray, Jr. in police custody put a national spotlight on racial injustice in our state. The world looked upon our residents, young people and community leaders demanding justice and an end of police brutality. Five years later, there is still much work that needs to be done in our community. The ongoing criminal justice reforms provided through the Consent Decree and collaborations between the Baltimore Police Department and U.S. Department of Justice are fundamental to continued progress. Protests in the streets of Baltimore over the last week have been mostly peaceful – an example to other communities. But there is much more work to be done.

Congress cannot be silent. We must lead through the pain and anguish. Our nation is in need of real help, real actions to right the wrongs of today and our historic past. We can start by passing a comprehensive plan to reform police-community relations, improve training/hiring of police officers, and hold police accountable for misconduct and use of excessive force. We must rebuild trust between the police and the communities they serve.

I have introduced two pieces of legislation that if enacted could make a significant difference and constitute a giant step forward in reforming police departments in America and rebuilding

trust between police officers and communities: The End Racial and Religious Profiling Act (ERRPA), and the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act (LETIA).

The [End Racial and Religious Profiling Act](#) is designed to enforce the constitutional right to equal protection of the laws by eliminating racial profiling at all levels of law enforcement by changing the policies and procedures underlying the practice. Discriminatory profiling is a waste of police resources and only further erodes needed trust.

The [Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act](#) takes a comprehensive approach at addressing the issue of police accountability by encouraging local police departments to adopt standards against misconduct, training and oversight protocols.

It should not have taken so long, but year after year, too many of my colleagues have put partisanship before justice and equality. Equality is not a partisan issue. Far too many names have been added to that painful list for us to wait to take action.

Until we address these flaws at their core, justice will be far from served. We can no longer be patient. We have a duty to turn grief into action, to fight for the protection and respect of human and civil rights our fellow Americans and to dismantle the racism that weaves through the structures of our society. We have a duty to do our part to demand and embody equality in our daily lives.

In response to the recent killings, Michelle Obama remarked: “It’s up to all of us — black, white, everyone — no matter how well-meaning we think we might be, to do the honest, uncomfortable work of rooting it out.”

The protests must not be the end of the conversation, but rather the beginning of our action toward change. We owe it to black Americans, to communities of color and to all who fought to establish a nation that upholds liberty and justice for all to stand up for these values each and every day.

Thank you for being a positive voice for change.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Ben